Collision of Jammu Tawi Express in Punjab

593. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ahmedabad bound Jammu Tawi Express collided with oncoming local train near village Mansar in Punjab on 14th December, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof with casualties;

(c) whether the cause of accident has been inquired into;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against erring officials; and

(e) the steps being taken to prevent recurrence of such accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On. 14.12.2004, there was a Head-on-collision between 9112 Dn Jammu Tawi -Ahmedabad Express and 1 JMP (DMU) Jalandhar City - Pathankot Passenger trains between Bhangala and mirthal stations on Jalandhar - Pathankot section resulting in death of 38 persons and injury to 40 persons.

(c) and (d) Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety is inquiring into this accident. As per the Preliminary Report of Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety, this accident occurred on account of failure of Railway Staff. Staff considered *prima-facie* responsible in this accident have been placed under suspension.

(e) Safety is the prime concern on Indian Railways and all possible steps are undertaken to prevent accidents. These measures tnclude adoption of suitable and modern technologies for interlocking and signalling system, upgradation of standards of track and rolling stock, modernization of maintenance practices, replacement of over aged assets, upgradation of training aids like simulators, checks on observance of safety precaution and provision of Anti Collision Device. A Corporate Safety Plan (2003-2013) has also been prepared and is followed.

A country wide safety drive has also been launched for ensuring observance of laid down precautions during failure of Signalling and Interlocking system and to streamline maintenance of equipment so as to minimize incidence of failures.